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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

20 July 1971

### MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: International Implications of the Presidential Trip to China

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The President's journey to Peking will be regarded by almost all governments as the beginning of a new phase in Sino-American relations which will profoundly affect the future balance of international power and influence. Most will welcome the development, applauding it as an act of realistic statesmanship and a move toward peace. But all will view it from the perspective of their own interests and, on this ground, some will be apprehensive.

2. The fact that Peking was moving to resume an active role in world politics has been evident for some time. What will surprise many will be the radical acceleration of this development signaled by a willingness to enter into direct contact with the United States at the

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highest level. The result may be a tendency in some quarters to exaggerate the significance of China's world role and the flexibility with which that role will be played.

3. The expectations and apprehensions of the major states concerned, as discussed below, will probably be tempered as the Sino-American dialogue proceeds. Peking's concrete aims -- to increase deterrence of pressures by the USSR, to gain a voice in the Indochina settlement, to isolate and weaken the Nationalist regime on Taiwan, to hedge against a revival of Japan's power and ambition -- will emerge in perspective and tend to be taken eventually as part of the normal landscape of world politics.

4. Peking is able and willing to contemplate the possible advantages to be gained by a more flexible approach to the United States at this time, in part because it perceives United States power in Asia, and particularly its military presence in Indochina, as being on the wane. Given this perception which has now existed for a year or more, it was no longer essential to hold to a rigid and totally uncompromising position toward the United States and there emerged the possibility that Peking's interests could be advanced as a consequence of contacts with the United States.

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5. Closely linked in time to this perception of the United States posture was China's emergence from the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. This audacious gamble had its costs and many problems remain to be solved. While upsets are still possible, China now seems to be firmly on the move. The net result appears to be a new confidence on the part of the top leadership -- Mao Tse-tung, Lin Piao, and Chou En-Lai -- and a new dynamic in domestic and foreign affairs. With its people hard at work, China is preparing -- on the basis of economic growth, military potential, and moral force -- to reclaim its age-old role as the dominant and central power in Asia. It expects recognition of this role to come by right, which means that Japan, the states of Southeast Asia, and the Western world must pay an appropriate price to earn China's favor and good will. Nonetheless, Peking is acutely aware of the distance it has to go in making good its claims and of the many obstacles which remain in its path.

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## II. EAST ASIA

6. In those parts of Asia which have long experience in dealing with Imperial China, the President's visit may have a unique impact. Asians have been accustomed over the centuries to seeing their rulers travel to Peking; in more recent times the flow has included friends and worshipers of Mao from all corners of the earth. Against this background and tradition, it will be difficult for the Asians to comprehend the purpose of the leader of the world's strongest power in making the long trip to Peking. While accepting and welcoming it as a move toward peace, they will tend to believe, in the absence of obvious contrary evidence, that the United States President has paid the higher price. As realists, these countries will move to adjust their positions to what they perceive as the evolving growth in Chinese power and influence.

### *Nationalist China*

7. As could be expected, initial reactions by officials of the Republic of China indicate that they have been badly shaken by recent United States contacts with Peking. The GRC's more emotional statements have questioned United States credibility and the National Assembly has described the United States action as a "betrayal of allies". Official spokesmen have described the present crisis as the most serious to hit the government since it was evicted from the mainland in 1949.

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8. Once beyond the immediate period of shock and bitterness, however, Taipei is likely to turn to more sober reassessments of its position. Even though it may continue to vent its anger against the United States in public, the government is likely to conclude in private counsels that actions taken against the United States are likely to damage the GRC far more than the United States. Even under emotional stress, the GRC is not likely to forget that it has nowhere else to turn; no other government is willing or able to replace the United States as the guarantor of Taiwan's security.

9. Thus, beyond the impassioned rhetoric, Taipei is likely to concentrate on efforts to pin down United States intentions. It will probably seek explicit reassurances on United States defense commitments toward Taiwan. The military, in particular, will hope to carry on as usual. In this way, and by trying to exact public guarantees of United States support, it will hope to place a limit on any United States concessions to Peking.

10. Internally, the Nationalists will be especially alert for any hints of evolving security problems. Any activity by the small Taiwan Independence Movement will be harshly suppressed. There will be heightened concern over the possibility of dissidence among students and

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even among the top ranks of the military. The GRC will probably take the prudent action of rechecking its carefully selected and strategically placed security forces. During this traumatic period, the GRC will probably show even less tolerance than usual for criticisms of its leadership. In the circumstances, a "spontaneous" demonstration aimed at United States installations on Taiwan cannot be ruled out. But Taipei will proceed with caution in this area, fearing not only United States reactions but also the possibility that such a demonstration might get out of control and turn against the government.

11. The United States move toward improving relations with Peking will probably not cause an immediate major upheaval on Taiwan. Nevertheless, there will be many who will read United States actions as marking the beginning of the end for the Nationalist regime. This will be especially so if, as now seems likely, the GRC loses or gives up its seat in the UN this year. Native Taiwanese will see new hope for an independent government, or at least one in which they can play a larger role. Within the GRC there is likely to be covert consideration of other options, not excluding a change of government. Some may even examine the idea of tentative feelers toward Peking. But for all the agitation that may shake the GRC, it is difficult to picture any drastic reorientation of policies as long as Chiang Kai-shek remains active.

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*Japan*

12. In Tokyo, the United States announcement has been something of a bombshell. The Sato government is greatly disturbed on three counts. Politically, it is considerably more vulnerable than before to charges of stalling in building a viable Japanese relationship with Peking. There is also genuine concern -- at least in the Sato-Kishi wing of the conservative party -- that Washington may have taken a giant step toward abandonment of the GRC and the island of Taiwan; the Japanese themselves had counted on much more time to develop and experiment with a *de facto* "Two Chinas" policy, and may well view the United States move as prematurely foreclosing this option. Finally, and perhaps most important in the long run, Japan's cherished policy objective of becoming the West's "bridge" to China would appear to have suffered major damage.

13. The consequences may be most apparent in Japanese domestic politics. Sato's increased vulnerability on China policy will substantially increase intra-party pressures for his retirement this year (rather than next) and will also harm the prospects of his designated heir, Foreign Minister Fukuda (who is equally vulnerable on the issue). To meet the attack, Sato may agree to new concessions to Peking on such issues as trade credits and official political exchanges. In this way --

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and as the dust settles in Washington and Peking -- he may gain time to restore party discipline on the overriding issue of full diplomatic recognition. But Sato has always been anathema to Peking and it seems likely that any persistent Japanese tide in favor of Peking will eventually carry Sato out of office.

14. Tokyo's foreign policy planners are certain to return to the drawing board in pursuit of ways to adjust to the new uncertainties opened up by the announcement -- for both the long and short term. Whatever tactics the Japanese adopt, there will be emphasis on projecting a more positive image of Japan as a factor on the Asian political scene, and seeking a more independent stance than before toward both Taipei and Peking. But United States and Japanese interests in Asia remain, after all, basically congruent, and for all its pique with the United States move, there remain distinct limits on Japan's freedom of action. It is not in the long run going to want to be too far out of step with Washington in dealing with the march of events in Asia. There are no doubt great differences of view in Tokyo about how to go about adjusting, and uncertainty about how far things will go. But the question will be under much more intensive study from now on, and Japan may have to define its long term role earlier than it had anticipated.

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*The Indochina Area*

15. It is by no means clear at this time that the recent move will have appreciable effect on the course of the Indochinese war; Hanoi rather than China calls the communist tune in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Traditionally suspicious of Chinese motives, the North Vietnamese are quite obviously concerned that their interests may be subordinated in any across-the-board Sino-American deal. They may, for instance, anticipate that the Chinese, in an effort to avoid upsetting the budding détente with the United States, will now urge Hanoi to exercise restraint in the war. Hanoi would resent and resist any such advice. Indeed, it is doubtful that Peking has either the leverage or the inclination to force Hanoi down any road it does not want to travel. But it is likely that, despite any assurances from Peking, Hanoi will become increasingly wary of Chinese intentions in the area and increasingly inclined to question the scope and direction of Peking's new activist foreign policy.

16. As for the South Vietnamese, there will be greater concern than before that United States disengagement will be conducted ultimately on terms negotiated with the communists. And, on the military side, there will be concern that additional constraints will be placed on the employment of United States air power. In the political realm, some in

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Saigon are already interpreting the United States initiative as an election boost for "Big" Minh, the "peace" candidate. As for Phnom Penh and Vientiane, convictions will be reinforced that the war will eventually be resolved in ways beyond their control by powers greater than themselves.

*Other States*

17. Elsewhere in East Asia, the United States move is also seen largely through the prism of local security needs. While virtually all governments applaud in principle the approach to China, there is concern that it may imply a relatively rapid and -- in their view -- premature United States withdrawal from security responsibilities in the region. The Malaysians, who have increasingly staked their security on some sort of regional compact between the major powers, appear least worried. Nor are the Filipinos, from their safe distance, particularly upset. Indonesia and Singapore, however, tend to take a more ominous view of the Chinese threat; they are likely to seek United States reassurances. All this and more can be said regarding the Thai despite their own persistent overtures to Peking. In all these states, it seems clear that existing tendencies toward accommodation with Peking will be accelerated.

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18. The Korean situation could obviously be greatly affected by any full-scale United States-Chinese rapprochement, and this possibility is much on the minds of the Koreans -- North and South. Pyongyang would resent any moderation in Peking's support of its brief against the United States; and will be watchful of any reluctance to offer military aid. Peking must be aware of North Korean unease; a few days ago, it supplied some high-level condemnation of the United States on the Pyongyang banquet circuit. Negative reactions in the South arise from apprehensions over the possibility of reduced United States military support for the ROK.

19. In Australia, recent events have clearly embarrassed Prime Minister McMahon. McMahon spent much of recent weeks criticizing his Labor opponent's alleged softness toward Peking and is now busily back-pedaling, while Labor -- which in any case has a good shot at power in the next general election -- stands to gain in the exchange. A similar situation in New Zealand has been resolved without damage to the incumbent conservative leadership but both countries seem certain to move more quickly than before toward diplomatic relations with Peking.

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### III. SOUTH ASIA

20. The Pakistani military regime, feeling estranged from most of the world and fearful of war with India, has seen only two major countries -- China and the United States -- as actually or potentially helpful to it. Pakistan has never been comfortable with the fact that its two best friends have been enemies. A change of any degree here would obviously be welcome because it might strengthen Pakistan's security against India at a time when it badly feels it needs it. Beyond this, it is doubtful that the heavily preoccupied Pakistani Government has given much thought to the United States-Chinese move. It will judge the unfolding process of United States-Chinese relations almost entirely in terms of whether it promises to hurt or harm Pakistan with respect to the threat it feels from India.

21. The news clearly caught India by surprise; public remarks to date indicate considerable uncertainty amongst officials, newspapers, and the general public. But anti-Chinese sentiments are strong in India; the United States too has come in for widespread and bitter criticism for its recent policies toward Pakistan. The danger of Indo-Pakistani war, immediately precipitated in this case by the Indians, is now greater than at any time since 1965. Thus the prospect of a United States-Chinese détente -- even marginally facilitated by the Pakistanis -- must give New Delhi considerable pause. In these circumstances the Indians are likely to seek further support and assurances from the USSR.

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#### IV. EUROPE

##### *The Soviet Union*

22. Though they may not feel free to say so publicly, the Soviet leaders can view the announcement of the President's forthcoming trip only as a piece of bad news which might get worse. It is not merely that they regard the implications of the journey as distinctly unpleasant; or only that they fear that cooperation between the United States and China would impinge on many Soviet interests and concerns in many areas. It is also that they are afraid that their opportunities to respond effectively are few.

23. First thoughts in Moscow will thus reflect apprehension and resentment; the suspicion will be strong that old fears of Sino-United States collusion have now been confirmed. There will thus be a strong element of emotionally tinged distrust in the USSR's initial reactions. This may manifest itself in the general atmosphere of United States-Soviet relations -- in the manner of Soviet diplomats and negotiators, in the tenor (though perhaps not the specifics) of Soviet propaganda, and in the content of private Soviet remarks.

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24. Moscow is not likely, however, to proceed in anger to revise drastically the main lines of its current foreign policies. These latter have been conceived in full awareness of the possibility of shifts in Chinese attitudes and positions. And the national interests and objectives that Soviet foreign policies are intended to serve -- as in the Middle East, in Europe, and toward the United States -- are not likely in the Soviet view to be greatly altered (though they certainly will be complicated) by improvements in relations between the United States and China. In Western Europe, for example, the Soviets seek through essentially moderate policies to gain acceptance of their position in Eastern Europe, to reduce United States influence and expand their own, and to avoid risks and problems which would complicate their posture toward China. None of these goals is likely to change solely as a consequence of Sino-United States cooperation. Similarly, the USSR's motives in SALT will probably remain basically unaffected.

25. For tactical purposes, and in the short term, however, the Russians might indicate less urgent interest in negotiating with the United States. They might, for example, conspicuously drag their feet in the Berlin talks (where they do not seem to be in a great hurry in any event); they might hope that this, in addition to distressing the United States, might stimulate apprehensions about Washington's policies

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among its West European allies. But Moscow is not likely on this account to completely disrupt the Berlin talks; to do so would jeopardize its policies in Western Europe as a whole.

26. There are, however, two major questions about possible Soviet responses which must be left partly open. One concerns the shape of domestic Soviet politics, the other bears on the USSR's relations with China itself.

-- There may be arguments within the Soviet establishment concerning the wisdom of the USSR's present foreign policies. The Brezhnev regime's vaguely conciliatory line toward Western Europe; its public defense of the need to negotiate agreements with the United States; and its clearly implied hope to restrain defense spending and concentrate on the problems of the civilian economy, all these positions are presumably controversial. (Indeed, there have been hints of controversy in the press and in the defensive tone of some of the leader's remarks.) Setbacks to Soviet policies abroad -- and the President's journey will be interpreted as a setback of sorts -- have an inevitable impact on politics at home. Some of the leadership will argue that an excessively harsh response to the United States move might only

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drive the Americans farther into the arms of the Chinese. But, on the whole, concern about the meaning of the United States turn toward Peking will tend to strengthen the arguments of those who distrust the United States the most or who are the most skeptical about a broad policy of moderation toward the West. There is very little prospect, however, that the Brezhnev regime will be forced by such arguments to change its policies in major ways.

-- Inevitably, if the President's visit to China creates concern among the Soviet leaders about Washington's motives, it also produces anxiety about Peking's. Moscow's dislike and distrust of China are perhaps more intensely felt than even its dislike and distrust of the United States. It is of course the spectre of the two countries' acting together, against the USSR, which forms the most chilling image in Soviet minds, and it is the actuality of such concert which the Russians are most anxious to forestall. The notion might occur that one way to accomplish this would be to convince Peking that its interests would be better served by an improvement in Sino-Soviet relations than by a move

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toward the United States. But it would be grossly out of character for the Soviets to adopt a truly conciliatory stance vis-à-vis China -- they have so far preferred instead to emphasize their military strength in dealings with the Chinese. Moscow could not in any event be sure that Peking would not interpret Soviet concessions as signs of weakness -- indeed, as the fruit of Peking's dalliance with Washington and thus as an incentive for even greater Sino-United States cooperation.

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*Eastern Europe*

27. The East European countries no doubt regard the prospect of improved relations between the United States and China with some hope and some anxiety and considerable uncertainty. Hope will rest on the broad position that all moves toward peace in the world are good for them because they may ultimately persuade the USSR to relax its policies in general and relax its hold on Eastern Europe in particular. But anxiety will arise from the possibility that the Sino-Soviet conflict will intensify and that -- as has happened in the past -- this will lead to greater Soviet pressures for conformity within the empire. Finally, there will be uncertainty because a variety of questions of major interest to the East Europeans cannot now be answered: what, if anything, do the new developments portend for United States policy in Europe and toward the USSR; how does Peking's new posture affect its attitudes toward the USSR and the Soviet position in Eastern Europe? And what does it all mean for Romania, the special object of both Chinese and United States interest and of Soviet concern?

28. Most official East European reactions to the President's journey and what it implies will of course reflect the Soviet view in greater or lesser degree. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany may only

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paraphrase *Pravda*; Poland and Hungary may provide hints of independent appraisals, but these are likely to be subtle. On the other hand, Romania will probably cheer, though nervously. Yugoslavia will be pleased but is likely to explore all the angles with some candor.

*Western Europe*

29. As indicated by the initial response to the Presidential announcement, the West Europeans view the development favorably. Most responsible newspapers regard the move as a spectacular and momentous action, possibly signifying an important turning point in world affairs -- even a redistribution of world power. Britain and France see the United States move as confirming policies they have advocated for years, especially those associated with efforts to bring Communist China out of isolation into the mainstream of world affairs. The Italian Government sees the announcement as confirming the wisdom of its own recent decision to recognize Peking.

30. Despite this generally positive view of the United States move, there are some uneasy stirrings about its implications. Some West European officials, for example, are resentful that they were not consulted beforehand. And, some West Europeans, particularly the West Germans -- anxious about the course of Ostpolitik -- will be apprehensive about the Soviet response and the effect the move may have on the process of East-West détente.

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As *Le Monde* has already asked, "Will the Soviets see in Sino-American rapprochement yet another reason for entente with Washington...or will they yield to the anxiety and aggressiveness which any prospect of 'encirclement' arouses?"

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

This is the paper which you  
requested last Friday.

  
JOHN ~~MU~~ZENGA  
Director, National Estimates

Copy to General Cushman

21 July 1971  
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101  
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